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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6668
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE 0071
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 0116
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR IMMEDIATE 0678
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0550
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE 0093
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000290

SIPDIS

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STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/26/2016
TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [KHLS](#) [PINR](#) [ETRD](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: HOSTAGE-TAKING, SITREP #10

REF: LAGOS 288 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Acting Pol/Econ Chief Shannon Ross for Reasons 1.4 (D & E)

11. (U) This is an action request, see paragraph 4.

Hostage Welfare Update

12. (C) Several sources continue to tell us the hostages are in good condition and will be released imminently. (Note: Post notes the history of government interlocutors predicting imminent release; unfortunately, we see no clear indications to support this view. End note.) Family members of five of the hostages, including the Americans, have given Willbros letters for delivery to the hostages. Once all nine hostages have family letters, Willbros will pass them to Governor Ibori for delivery.

13. (C) The Shell crisis group has completed its initial repatriation planning. Repatriation plans include contingencies for a partial release scenario. The hostage-takers could release some hostages, while continuing to hold American and British hostages, because of their perceived value in bringing the USG and the HMG into the negotiation process.

14. (SBU) Action Request: Post requests Department (Consular Affairs Bureau) coordinate with FBI Victims Assistance Office to ensure consistent message is sent to the hostages' families. End Action Request.

Negotiations Update

15. (C) Governor Ibori and senior Willbros management met today, but a report on the outcome of the meeting is not yet

available. Contacts have told Polcouns that Ibori is not negotiating with the hostage-takers directly, and they do not recognize his authority. According to these sources, they continue to demand the involvement of other third parties.

¶16. (C) Other government sources indicated two people were arrested yesterday in connection with the kidnappings. Government contacts told us the kidnappers are upset that during the previous hostage situation in January, negotiators absconded with most of the money paid by the Bayelsa State government to secure the hostages' release. The hostage-takers now distrust they will receive promised funds, prolonging the current negotiations.

Energy Update: Shell Facilities Still Closed

¶17. (C) There is no change in the status of damaged or closed Shell facilities, and production remains reduced approximately 550,000 bpd. Power generation remains down by approximately 850 MW (of a total of 3200 MW nationwide) due to a damaged gas feeder line, which cannot be repaired until the security situation improves. The Nigerian Gas Company still has not made a damage assessment.

¶18. (C) ExxonMobil (EM) Managing Director Chaplin told us despite EM operations being well outside of the current "hot zone," they are having an increasing difficulty recruiting skilled expatriate workers to come to Nigeria. Chaplin's remarks echo those of other petroleum industry managers. (Note: Recruitment difficulties are likely to particularly impact maritime operators and small oil service companies,

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since their workers are more exposed to working in the Delta creeks than employees of the major operators. End note.)

Media Update

¶19. (SBU) This Day newspaper reports the arrival of a 6-man U.S. anti-terror team. Citing diplomatic and intelligence sources, the article describes the team as "undercover" intelligence experts with experience "trailing al-Qaeda operatives in the mountains of Afghanistan." The article reports the team was requested by the GON and would liaise with its Nigerian anti-terror counterparts. The same article also describes a meeting between the President and GON security officials, where an angry President reportedly chastised them for ineffectiveness and said he would call on the United States if they could not deal with the situation. The Guardian newspaper reports a recent interview with Bayelsa State ex-Governor Alamieyeseigha. According to the report, Alamieyeseigha promised he could get the hostages released in 48 hours, but he would need to be released to do so. The Vanguard stated the way out of the Delta malady is to acknowledge the country has been unjust to the Delta region, and implement a Marshall plan to provide employment for youth, build small industry, and construct water and health facilities.

Military Update

¶10. (S/NF) A military intelligence source told us the hostages were in good condition and would be released soon. He said back channels had been opened to assure the hostage-takers that no military reprisal would follow the release of the hostages. He said preparations had been underway to secure release for yesterday, and he was frustrated that it did not happen. He said troop deployment following recent incidents of sectarian violence and rioting were stretching the military thin. He also confirmed that

the commander of the Delta Joint Task Force (JTF) Zamani would eventually be replaced and a troop buildup in Warri would occur.

Consular Update

¶11. (C) All Consular staff are accounted for. There have been no reports of additional attacks on AmCits.
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